

PROGRAM DATE:2021-06-10

PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: PROFESSOR ZOZO DYANI MHANGO – DEPARTMENT OF JURISPRUDENCE – FACULTY OF LAW - UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity– Women in Unity'. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary African Women's milestone achievements in their struggles for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy, racism, socio-economic class division and gender based violence.
DR. MALKA	Joining us on the line today is Professor Zozo Dyani Mhango, who is a professor in the Department of Jurisprudence at the Faculty of Law in the University of Pretoria; she holds LLB and LLM degrees from the University of Western Cape and a Doctorate of Juridical Science LLD degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in the United States. She has been admitted as an advocate of the High Court of South Africa and she was recently appointed as an inaugural fellow of the Pan African Scientific Council. Welcome to the show Professor!
PROF MHANGO	Thank you so much for having me and hello to the viewers.
DR. MALKA	Professor, to start with, please tell us about some of the work that you do as well as responsibilities that come with holding your position as Professor in the Department of Jurisprudence.
PROF MHANGO	So as academics we do three main duties, the first one is to teach students, so we teach and supervise students from undergraduate to postgraduate, so I supervise students from their LLB elective and also I supervise the students in masters degree LLM and also doctoral degrees in my area of interest and I also teach them law and transformation and I also teach masters in global justice. Secondly, we do research in our area of interest as academics where we have to publish that research in accredited journals, this means that those journals must be accredited by the Department of Higher Education and Training in order for the university to get subsidy, so we are required to publish in those journals and then we also go to conferences, whether international conferences or local conferences, where we present our papers to our peers that our going to critique and give feedback to our research. And then thirdly, we have to do administrative work such as belonging to committees within the faculty of law where I am and also within the university at large and also added to that, we also have to do what is known as academic citizenship, where we will be external examiners for other universities, where we will belong to the editorial committees of journals and also where we are requested to review academic books. So that's what we do and my research is on international criminal justice in Africa; I look at the African Union's Member States' obligations for international crimes, this includes doing research, looking at the power struggles between the African Union and the International Criminal Court and also look at what the African Union Member States ought to do to curb the international crimes that are being committed during armed conflict in Africa and tied to that I look at South Africa's obligations when it comes to holding perpetrators of international crimes accountable. So that's basically what we do, but most importantly, what I enjoy is being involved with students associations; currently I am a guardian of the student tribunal or student court where students have this

	mock constitutional court, they deal with student legal problems and I am just being their guardian but I deal with very smart students, I'm just enjoying the ride because I don't guide them that much, instead I'm just watching them do the job with such dedication and love of law.
DR. MALKA	You have such an interesting and exciting portfolio. A point that I want to tap in briefly is with regards to connection to students because obviously our world has changed dramatically, I mean in the last year we have had to adjust systems literally overnight to still maintain some sense of normality; how has this impacted on your teaching dynamic, because clearly, students haven't been able to have face-to-face engagements, to return to campus, everything is now in the online environment?
PROF MHANGO	Ah it has been a great challenge, it has been tough for all of us; us as academics and also for students, because for me, I love seeing those students, I love going to class, I love seeing their expression and ascertain whether they understand the lesson and now with teaching remotely I am unable to see whether they understand the work and deal with that issue there and there, I will only be able to deal with it once I get an email from a student asking me to explain something. So it has been really, really tough and also teaching a course, such as law and transformation for example, requires discussion, debates and this is limited by remote teaching because some students do not have the data to go online when we are having live sessions, so they are missing out and some students, even though they will come to just listen, they are unable to participate because of issues of privacy, they don't want to show their faces online or they just don't want to talk. So it really has been difficult, but we are trying to make sure that we tell students that we understand, we are there for them, we all in this together and we are going to navigate it until everyone is vaccinated and we are able to go back to face-to-face teaching, but I am suffering because I just love going to class.
DR. MALKA	I'm not sure if I'm being a little too far-fetched here in my thinking, but sometimes I wonder about human rights and the way that our world is changing and evolving, that if access to the internet and access to data, because of the way that we have to function in society now, if that shouldn't almost be constituted as part of our human rights; with your background and specialisation, what are some of your views about that?
PROF MHANGO	Well I think access to data, especially during this time, should be considered as a right, as a human right, because without access to data then the rights to education is affected, it is negatively impacted because students will be unable to have access to education. So definitely is a problem and I know that universities, including our university, are trying to make sure that they provide data where they can, they get sponsorships and they talk to the network providers, but there is more that needs to be done, I think the government needs to be involved because we don't know how long Covid-19 is going to stay with us, also with the problems slow progress when it comes to vaccination. So yes, human rights; rights to access to education is impacted and therefore we should seriously consider access to data to be one of those rights.
DR. MALKA	Thank you for elaborating on that point. Earlier this year we had an interesting conversation with Professor Helena Barnard from GIBS and one of the things that impacted me was when she said that she was starting with her, I think it was postgraduate studies before she was a doctor and she wanted to address business in Africa, but what concerned me and as well as her when she was relaying the story, was the fact that she could either have a choice of studying in Britain or in America, but not in Africa, and it seemed almost unfathomable

	to me that if we want to learn about ourselves, that we have to go overseas. Given that you are part of the Pan African Scientific Research Council, that you have a strong expression of interest in the topic of international criminal justice in Africa, please tell us more about the Pan African Scientific Research Council and its role to develop and promote African research.
PROF MHANGO	Yes, so the Pan African Scientific Research Council is fairly new. It was only established in 2020 when Covid-19 came about, so the role of the council is to bring together African and Africa focused researchers and professionals to enable cross-disciplinary, cross-generational and cross-geographical collaboration and learning, so, the goal is to promote research, career development and public engagement among African and Africa focused researchers and professionals. So it has thematic areas that range from pure sciences such as mathematics, statistics, also medical science and social science that I belong, because it includes law, so, it is big on promoting and encouraging research in Africa. It also advances career development for young scholars by providing mentorship and workshops, so my role there currently is that I am a fellow, so one of the senior people within the council, so I have to provide some mentorship and also what I like about it is that it is big in making sure that the research that comes from Africa is going to help Africa by making sure that there is public engagement, so it's not just about research, there will be public engagement with policy makers where we may participate in policy making that is going to help Africa as a whole. And just to go back to what was said; it's really strange that we go and study overseas to these universities, because I also did my doctoral degree in the US, and you go there and you find that their libraries on Africa are bigger than the libraries that we have here in our African universities, so there is something that needs to be done and I think that the Pan African Scientific Research Council can also help in making sure that we do our own research in Africa, about Africa and we're going to expand on it and maybe our libraries are going to be as big as those libraries in the west.
DR. MALKA	It's a great initiative and I think you were very brave doing your launch in 2020 as we were on that cusp of Covid-19 and I really hope that the mandates are fulfilled by this initiative to really grow our expertise and for us to embrace our Africanness and the contribution that we have to provide not just to our continent, but indeed, across the world. Earlier you mentioned academic citizenship and I noticed that you are Managing Editor of the South African Chapter for International Association of Women Judges Law Journal, which is due to be launched this year; you are a member of the editorial committee of Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa and the Editorial Board of the Southern African Public Law; you are also a member of the Advisory Board of the African Year Book of International Humanitarian Rule and the African Centre for Transitional Criminal Justice, based at the University of the Western Cape's Faculty of Law. I wanted to ask you more about the notion of academic citizenship and being part of this and growing the community, growing the academic community, because it obviously doesn't just sit within one university, but extends across the academic network.
PROF MHANGO	Yes, so academic citizenship is very big at universities because the idea is to collaborate with other institutions and not just sit in your department or in your faculty and not collaborate with others. So, as we move up the ladder, as a full professor now I am expected to do more, that's why you'll see all those roles that I play, so I have to make sure that people know about my work and also know that I am able to do more than just do research and teaching. I am able to collaborate, I am able to network,

	<p>that's why I have to be involved in journal editing, I have to be involved in providing advisory to other institutions and also to do the external link for other universities. The academia also in South Africa is very small, so if someone does not take up all these opportunities, does not say yes to these requests, then the academia won't be able to grow in South Africa, that's why we have to avail ourselves. Sometimes it gets too much, but we have to do what needs to be done and I'm enjoying collaborating, knowing about my colleagues and also knowing about what other colleagues are researching about what other colleagues do in those universities and just maybe sometimes we learn and we steal ideas and we implement them in our departments or universities.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Do you think that saying yes to so many things is in part due to the fact that women are still under-represented in the hierarchies in academic institutions, there are very few women still today that are represented as deans or even vice chancellors, do you think that that has contributed to saying yes to so many things?</p>
PROF MHANGO	<p>Oh yes, it has contributed a lot because, for example in my faculty, if I'm not mistaken, I think I'm the only full professor who is of African origin in the whole faculty, so I cannot say no to requests such as saying we need someone like you who can sit in this committee because there aren't many of you and I have to go because I need to participate and make sure that my voice is heard, but it's not just unique to South Africa, because it's everywhere, women are not many when it comes the academia, especially in high positions like deanship. I know at UP our dean is the first woman ever to be a dean of the law faculty, so we have to be there, it takes a lot of time but until we mentor and encourage young women academics to take up these positions, we just have to do the job until that happens and unfortunately, ya, it does take up on our time, but there's nothing that we can do about it for now.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>These are sacrifices that you're making, but for the women of tomorrow, they're going to see this as being normal and in effect you are creating these opportunities for them to help pave the way.</p>
AD BREAK	
DR. MALKA	<p>Today we're talking to Professor Zozo Dyani Mhango, who is a professor in the Department of Jurisprudence, at the Faculty of Law in the University of Pretoria. In the previous segment of the conversation Professor spoke about some of the roles that she plays within the institution, from teaching to research to academic citizenship, we also touched briefly on aspects of the impact of Covid-19 and potentially how, during this period, that access to data, access to the internet could be constituted as a human right in order to enable some of our other rights, such as education, and we spoke briefly about the role of women in the hierarchies at academic institutions. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter: @WomanityTalk.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Professor, turning towards more of a personal perspective, you hold your LLB, LLM and LLD; what attracted you to the field of law?</p>
PROF MHANGO	<p>Well I think there are two things that made me be interested in the field of law, the first one is that I have a brother, an older brother, who did law in the late eighties, he's now an attorney, so I've always looked up to him and I wanted to follow his footsteps and be an advocate, but the second reason is that when, I think I was in grade six or it was standard four then, our then teacher asked us what we wanted to do when we grow up and growing up in the former Ciskei during the turbulence, there were always these issues during the apartheid time, etcetera, so when he asked us this I said I want to be an advocate so that I can help my people, he said</p>

	<p>to me, ah well, we can't always be what we want to be. So I guess in a way at the back of my mind I wanted to prove him wrong because after my matric I did my LLB at the University of the Western Cape and up until I did my LLD, but I didn't practice as an advocate even though I was admitted as one, I decided to choose this path of academia because I saw that I enjoyed doing research when I was still a student. So those are two reasons that made me want to be a lawyer, but I know that my mother wanted me to be a doctor, but I did become a doctor but not a medical doctor.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Very true and you're still helping people, when I think of how much legislation has changed and the other day I was looking at the rights and opportunities that women have today and reflecting that a hundred years ago we wouldn't have half of the opportunities that we have now and it's purely because of legislative changes and how the law has changed things for the good for women.</p>
PROF MHANGO	<p>Oh yes, we constantly review the law, we constantly review the court judgements as academics and we write about it, we discuss it in different forums and that helps because we attract policy makers to listen to what we are saying and then they do the changes and sometimes some of the academics go to parliament to talk about laws that they want to pass and critique those laws and help them come up with more appropriate laws that are going to help the society.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Staying with this concept, I came across a quote from the then International Development Law Organisation's Director General, Irene Kahn, where she said; <i>"The quality of justice for women improves when women are not only consumers of justice, but also providers of justice"</i>. Please can you share your perspective on this statement?</p>
PROF MHANGO	<p>Oh yes, I believe that women play a huge role when it comes to peace and justice. As someone who researches on issues of peace in the region I often come across research that says that things can work better if more women are included in that leadership that deals with peace and security in Africa. So, we cannot just sit around and let men only to decide what is best for us all or what is best for women, for example, in my area of research I often deal with sexual violence during armed conflict and how sexual violence during armed conflict amounts to international crimes and what needs to be done when it comes to this and for women to be quiet on this serious issue that affects women, it wouldn't make sense, so we need to be involved in areas of peace and justice, we need to be involved in the negotiations, if there are peace negotiations women have to be there, they cannot take a seat back...a backseat, they need to be there and they need to hold leadership positions that are going to make an impact in those negotiations, not to just be there as an added number. They need to be there, contribute, be listened to, but it's hard to do, but it's very good that we also have the UN Women, where our former deputy president, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, is a director, I think that they are pushing so hard for women to be taken seriously and for women to take...to participate in leadership and political issues.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>We know that the road to equality is not smooth, whether it is from a point of race and in our show in particular, from a point of gender; please share with us some of the obstacles that you've encountered as a woman whilst building your career and what you did to overcome them?</p>
PROF MHANGO	<p>Oh ya, there have been obstacles, from people refusing to call me by my titles, if they see me they see me as...I don't think they even see me as an academic, so they will call me Ms. Dyani, they won't really call me by my</p>

	<p>title. I remember this one time where I had to go to class where I had to school students about what we do as academics, especially as women academics, because you'll find that even for students it's very easy to call our male counterparts and give them their title of professor even if they are not, but for women, I don't know why they find it so difficult, so that's the first thing, the title we have to fight to be called by our titles. Secondly, as a woman and as a mother you always have to take into account that you can't just be sitting in the study the whole day or the whole night without making sure that your family is fed, that your kids are fed, you look at their homework, etcetera, and I find it that when it comes to my partner, he can just sit there until I tell him that, you know, we are in the same field, you know exactly what academics are doing, why can't you also do the things that I do as a parent or as a member of the household and then luckily he can see because he is in the same field. So we have those issues, I mean even for our own siblings and parents, they know that yes you do the work, you are a professor but I'm not sure if they understand how much time you need in order for you to climb up the ladder, because for us our job is not a nine to five job, it's not just going to class and then when students are going on holiday you take a holiday as well; you have to do your research and doing your research is not an easy thing, it does not come easily, it's by practice, it's taking a lot of time. So I constantly need to remind people that yes, I work, but I don't work normal hours like everybody else, sometimes at night I wake up in the middle of the night because an idea comes and then I have to write it down, wake up, write down that idea and then as a woman, a black woman, there is also another element to it, because you're not taken seriously because of the colour of your skin and there are so many books written about this, there is an anthology written by American academics, which is called 'Presumed Incompetent' where the authors are writing about their own experiences as women of colour in Northern America and how they are not taken seriously in their craft, only because they are women, especially with a background of not speaking fluently and I'm sure you can even hear from my own accent that I don't come from the so-called Model C schools, I come from schools from rural areas, so that also is taken as a negative thing because you are supposed to speak a certain way and therefore you cannot be taken seriously if you don't speak that certain way. So there are a number of challenges that we face, but one cannot just sit and feel sorry herself, you need to work harder, you must understand your own limits, work through them, and you will find yourself in the same position that I am in now, because I have started from being an associate lecturer and then the 1st of July it will be my seventeenth year in the academia and I am now a full professor. So we can't just complain, we do the work and now because I hold this position I have a voice where I will make sure that those who come behind me are not going to suffer the same way that I have done, I have to create opportunities for them, I have to make sure that they don't suffer the same way that I did and that's exactly what I am doing.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You mentioned knowing your limitations, but sometimes I think maybe we should flip this on its head and it's almost knowing the limitations of others that are around us because of their perceptions and limited perceptions, that they don't see the full potential of people like you.</p>
PROF MHANGO	<p>Oh yes, but it's hard sometimes, you try to change people's perceptions and you also see people thinking hard when you talk about these issues, they think hard about their own role in all of this and you see the change, you see that they are now treating you differently than what they thought</p>

	<p>of you. I mean I've heard colleagues who have said to me, once I became an associate professor they said; well you know Zozo we never thought you were going to make it, and you don't understand why I person would not think that you're going to make it when you are doing the same thing, but after they saw that oh, actually I can make it, their perceptions have really changed. So, of course they have to talk about these issues and then some will change and do what we have to do.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Professor, we're coming towards the end of the show and in this section I'd like to ask you about some of the factors that you consider have contributed towards your success?</p>
PROF MHANGO	<p>Well for me I have grown up as this ambitious person, I guess because of my background I told myself that I want to see myself leaving the rural areas, going and working somewhere and my mother, in fact both my parents, instilled the importance of education when it came to us, they were not educated but they made sure that any of their child that wants to go to varsity they will make that to happen and they were able to send three of us out of five kids to university, now with the little money that they had. So that's the first thing that made me want to do better, to get out of poverty situations, to make my life better so that if I had kids one day, my kids will be in a better position and secondly when I tell myself that I...when I set goals for myself, I make sure that I reach those goals, so I will tell myself that in three years time I need to do this and I make sure that that happens and so far I have been likely to be able to do that and also I surround myself with mentors, I'm still being mentored even today, one of my mentors is Professor Penny Andrews, I think you have interviewed her sometime, the former dean of the University of Cape Town...</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...yes, a fascinating conversation, I recall very well.</p>
PROF MHANGO	<p>Yes, so she is my mentor, I surround myself with those kind of people, strong women who when I have problems I go cry to them and they are able to help me, to encourage me and to tell me that I can do this and I also make sure that I take care of my mental health. So when, I guess I'm privileged now, because I am now a full professor, like if I am tired, I feel don't want to work today, I make sure that I don't do it, especially if I don't have a class, of course if I have a class I will go to class, but if I am tired and I don't feel like doing the research, I will tell myself that I can take this day off and I know I'll be feeling better for me to have fresh mind and tackle the work. So I think it's important to listen to one's body and make sure that you at the right space of mind before you can do the work or deal even with people.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>That's a great set of ingredients from understanding your balance, both in terms of workloads, personal loads, reaching out to mentors for strengthening and lifelong learning. Finally, as we close today's conversation, please can you share a few words of inspiration that you'd like to pass onto women and girls who are listening to us today?</p>
PROF MHANGO	<p>Oh yes, so you have to believe in yourself, seek help, because we cannot do everything on our own, we don't know everything, so seek help either from your family or from your mentors, seek mentors, so it doesn't have to be your lecturer or your teacher, you can go to someone who is not even in the field that you are interested in, but you know that they work hard, you can see that they are serious about their craft and then you go and talk to them about what do you do in order to succeed in whatever field that you want and I always tell this to my students that always talk to your lecturers, it's not only about the schoolwork, it's also about anything,</p>

	so our doors are always open to make sure that we are able to help students in any way, if we are unable to help them, we know that we can send them elsewhere where they can be able to seek help and obviously hard work does pay off. Thanks.
DR. MALKA	Great words of practical advice and recognising that the humanness of people and the availability and accessibility of people who can help you when you need it. Thank you so much for joining us today.
PROF MHANGO	Thank you so much for having me, thank you, I really enjoyed this.
	PROGRAMME END